



# CAMP LIFE

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ELEVENTH RHODE ISLAND

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CAPTAIN WILLIAM A. MOWRY

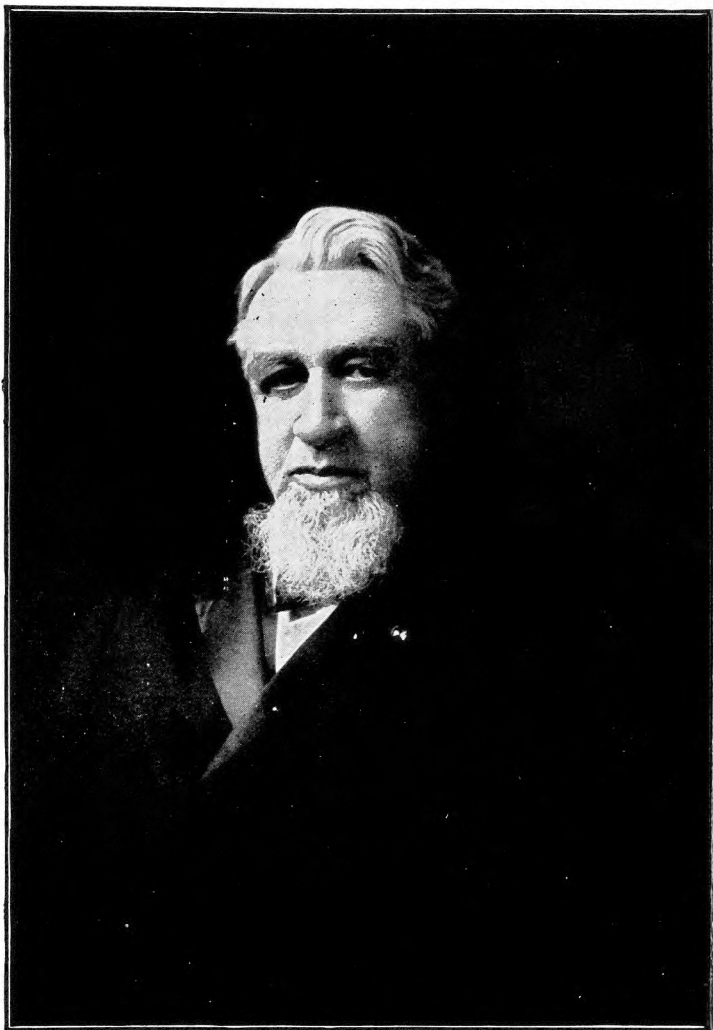


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*From a photograph by Marceau*

*William A. Henry*

# CAMP LIFE

## In The Civil War

Eleventh R. I. Infantry

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BY CAPTAIN WILLIAM A. MOWRY

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BOSTON, 1914



## DEDICATION.

To my beloved and esteemed Lieutenants, Sergeants, Corporals, and every Private now living, who served with me in Company K, 11th Regiment, Rhode Island Volunteer Infantry, in the Civil War, and to the memory of all those who have been mustered out of life's service, I dedicate this booklet.





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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE story of the Civil War of 1861-'65 has been wonderfully well written. The published accounts include general histories, histories by states, by army corps, brigades and regiments.

These books, however, deal mainly in military manœuvres, campaigns and battles. But, in these days of peace propagandism the public mind very properly turns away from tales of slaughter, and desires to hear more of the soldier's life — his camp life, his marches, picket duty, etc.

My life as a soldier in the Union army began in September, 1862, and ended by "Expiration of term of service" in July, 1863. I enlisted as a private, was commissioned as captain of Company K in the 11th Rhode Island Volunteer Infantry. My company

and myself were extremely fortunate in our officers, both commissioned and warrant officers. My lieutenants were as follows: First lieutenant, James T. Edwards; second lieutenant, Samuel Thurber. Sergeants, as follows: William W. Thomson, John P. Pond, Daniel J. Viall, William H. Hedley, Myron S. Clark; Corporals, William E. Millard, Orlando P. Thomson, Royal E. Jones, James Bowden, Joseph E. Brown, George Chase, Augustus W. Winsor Jr., Robert Lauder.

First Lieut. Edwards resigned on the 26th of March, 1863, and Lieut. Thurber was commissioned first lieutenant, and served through the term of service.

John Pitman, son of Lieut. Colonel Pitman was commissioned as second lieutenant, and served till our muster out in July.

During the first six months the officers of Company K had a *Schoolmaster's Mess*. The captain was the principal of the English High School, Providence. First Lieut. Edwards was principal of the Academy at East Greenwich, and Lieut. Thurber was a teacher in the Providence High School.

Here I beg to mention some facts of the subsequent life of these officers:—

Lieut. Edwards was principal of the East Greenwich Academy, later principal of the Chamberlain Institute, in Randolph, N. Y.; then superintendent McDonogh School near Baltimore, Md.; field secretary of the Chautauqua System of Education; member of the Rhode Island Senate six years; of the New York Senate two years; delegate to the Southern Laymen's District Convention, Philadelphia, 1866; presidential elector, 1868; vice-president Chautauqua Board of Trustees; member of Congress of Religions, 1893; president Western New York Agricultural Society; and the author of a variety of books, pamphlets and magazine articles. He was a graduate of the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., A.M., D.D., LL.D. He is still living (1914) in Randolph, N. Y.,—an invalid.

Lieut. Thurber was a graduate of Brown University, in the class of 1858. His *alma mater* later gave him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Lieut. Thurber after his service in the Providence High School was prin-

cipal of the Hyde Park, Mass., High School; of the High School in Bangor, Me.; in Syracuse, N. Y.; Worcester, Mass.; in Milton, Mass., and for about twenty-five years master of the Girls' High School, Boston.

Lieut. Thurber was a rare scholar and teacher of English, French and German, the ancient, classical languages, and all the studies of the secondary school and college. He died January 13, 1913, at the home of his daughter in Roxbury, at the advanced age of nearly seventy-six years. A splendid memorial has been issued by his friends.

Of Lieut. John Pitman an equally interesting story could be told. After his experience with the 11th Rhode Island, as sergeant major and lieutenant, he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, graduated in 1867, was commissioned first lieutenant in 1874, captain in 1878, major in 1894, lieutenant colonel in 1903, colonel in 1904, retired and advanced to rank of brigadier general in 1906. He is now living in Orange, N. J. He has served in various arsenals, ordnance depots, foundry duty at Cold Spring, N. Y., and instructor in chemistry at

West Point. He is a member of the Loyal Legion, American Chemical Society, and Society of Chemical Industry.

Captain William A. Mowry was a graduate of Brown University, class of 1858, received the degree of A.M., Brown, 1866; Ph.D. from Bates, in 1882, LL.D. from Whitman, 1906. He was principal of the English High School, Providence, five years, and from 1864 to 1884, senior principal of the English and Classical School, a private academy in Providence. This school he founded, and opened, on the 22nd of February, 1864. It was designed to fit boys for college or business. It grew till, when he left it in 1884, it numbered two hundred and fifty pupils and had fifteen competent, superior teachers.

In 1884 Capt. Mowry moved to Boston, and for many years filled the editor's chair, editing and publishing "The Journal of Education," and later the magazine "Education" and "Common School Education." He was superintendent of schools in the city of Salem, Mass., and in 1894 removed to Hyde Park, where he now lives. He has served as teacher more than thirty years, was superintendent of



the schools of Cranston, R. I., and of Salem, Mass., was a member of the School Board of Providence six years and of the Boston Board three years. He has lectured widely, especially before teachers' institutes, having given about two thousand lectures in twenty-five states. He is a member of the A. I. of I., the N. E. A., the G. A. R., and the Loyal Legion. He has written many books, pamphlets, magazine and newspaper articles. Among the books written by him are histories, biographies, school reading books, civil government and latest of all "Recollections of a New England Educator."

Our First Sergeant, William W. Thomson, was a fine officer, faithful, reliable, popular with officers and men. He died soon after his term of service in the army, beloved and mourned by all who knew him.

The second sergeant, John P. Pond, was a young student in the East Greenwich Academy. He was bright, keen, sterling, and every way reliable. Faithful to every duty, kind and courteous to all, he won most favorable opinions from everybody with whom he

in a New York regiment, and soon I heard of his too early death.

Daniel J. Viall was the third on our list of sergeants. Earnest, bold, resolute, prompt, energetic ready for every duty. Not always so popular as the first and second sergeants were, because he was of a different temperament. He was earnest and impulsive. But he was a good officer.

Then there was Sergeant Hedley, — easy going, gentle, pleasant and agreeable.

Finally, Sergeant Clark was true as steel, clear cut, quiet, earnest, devoted to duty. After this campaign he went west. I have been told that he lived in Portland, Ore., and lately the news has come of his death in California. He was a good soldier.

Of others I have spoken in the last chapter of these sketches.

## LIVING MEMBERS

of Company K at the present time (1913) so far as known. Probably not all of these are still living, but we have not heard of their death.

Capt. William A. Mowry, Hyde Park, Mass.  
First Lieut. James T. Edwards, Randolph,  
N. Y.

Second Lieut. John Pitman, 167 Berkeley  
Avenue, Orange, N. J.

Sergeant Wm. H. Hedley, 1 Searles Street,  
Providence, R. I.

Corporal Orlando P. Thomson, 106 High-  
wood Avenue, Ridgewood, N. J.

Corporal George W. Chase, 28 Burnett  
Street, Providence, R. I.

Private Orin S. Arnold, Killingly, Conn.

Private Albert H. Chase, Washington, D. C.

Private William R. Cornell, 142 Ontario  
Street, Providence, R. I.

Private Henry H. Fisher, Soldiers' Home,  
Bristol, R. I.

Private Otto Gerlach, 466 Fountain Street,  
Providence, R. I.

Private Henry F. Greene.

Private Thomas L. Goff, 40 Wickendon  
Street, Providence.

Private Josiah R. Goddard, Missionary,  
Ningpo, China. (Reported dead in 1914.)

Private Frank D. Holmes, 31 Franklin

Private George W. Kent, Pawtucket, R. I.

Private Joseph H. Leach, New Bedford,  
Mass.

Private Edward A. Palmer.

Private Henry F. Taylor, 314 South Street,  
Pittsfield, Mass.

Private Samuel J. Townsend, Brockton,  
Mass.

Private Walter R. D. Vaughan, 78 Stanwood  
Street, Providence, R. I.

About twenty per cent. of this company  
alive after more than half a century has  
elapsed since their muster out of the service.



## CAMP LIFE IN THE 11TH R. I. REGIMENT.

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TODAY I am engaged with reflections of 1861-'65. I honor the brave boys who enlisted in '61, '62, '63, in the war for the preservation of the Union of this great Republic.

I recall vividly the day when the First Rhode Island started for Washington. It was on the 20th of April, 1861. They boarded a steamboat at Fox Point, and amid the booming of cannon and the music of the band, sailed away for the seat of war. A beautiful national flag had been presented to the regiment by the ladies of Providence. At the battle of Bull Run that flag was perforated by eleven rebel bullets.

I closed my room in the High School to allow myself and the boys to witness the departure of the regiment. After they had

sailed away, while I was walking up Benefit Street, a friend saluted me and asked, "When are you going to enlist, Mr. Mowry?" Instantly I reflected that in the Mexican War the six New England States sent *one regiment*, in which was *one platoon* from Rhode Island. Half a company from our state! My answer was: "Oh, I guess I'll go in the Fifth Regiment." I thought that answer was safe for me. But, I did not enlist till the Eleventh was called for, in the early autumn of 1862.

#### CONDITIONS AT THAT TIME.

That summer was a time of great sorrow and doubt among the loyal people of this country. McClellan's great army had pushed its way to within a few miles of Richmond, but had failed to capture that city, the capital of the Confederacy, and the army had been called back from the James River to the Potomac. Those were blue days. Army affairs were extremely discouraging.

On the 4th of August, 1862, President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 men to serve for a period of nine months.

## THE Y. M. C. A. RAISES THREE COMPANIES.

Then the people of Providence began to stir themselves. The Young Men's Christian Association of that city appointed a committee to raise a company of volunteers.

Early in September several young men agreed to enlist, including the writer of this paper.

We planned meetings to secure enlistments. The first was to be held in Roger Williams Hall, Providence, on the following Monday evening, and it was announced that all the speaking would be by those who had already volunteered. This meeting, with speeches made by volunteers only, was repeated, and in a few days we had enlisted three hundred men, three full companies, two of which were attached to the 11th Regiment as Companies I and K and the third joined the 12th Regiment. Captain Joseph H. Kendrick commanded Company I and Captain William A. Mowry Company K in the Eleventh, while Captain Edward S. Cheney was placed in command of Company A in the Twelfth. So two full regiments for



nine months were raised. The Eleventh left Providence for Washington on Monday evening, the 6th of October, 1862.

### MY FIRST COMPANY DRILL.

I shall never forget the first time I took my company out to drill. It was just after we had entered Virginia. So far, I had left the drilling to Lieut. Edwards, who had been drilled himself and could manage the elementary movements quite well, while I was busy getting my company properly equipped. I knew nothing whatever of the drill.

Now the time had come for me to take the matter in hand. I commanded on the march and had served one day, our first day in Washington, as officer of the day. So far I had made no special blunder. Now, what should I take up for my first drill? I certainly did not wish to try the manual of arms, for the lieutenant had drilled them in the manual, and I — who knew nothing whatever of any part of the soldier's drilling — did not wish to offer the comparison. Hence I decided to take "stack arms," which had not

yet been undertaken. I studied carefully "Casey's Tactics," on making and breaking the stack. So, there we were, on the drill ground, in the "Peach Orchard," and I began the drill. Other companies were drilling all around me.

I began carefully, and the schoolmaster surely could master that intricate movement. I had learned well my lesson and had a small amount of confidence. But it took a long time to form a good line of stacks. Finally, that line — a fairly straight line — was formed. Then I gave the command "Rest."

Just after the command had been spoken, another captain, a "light infantry" man, came along and bluntly addressed me as follows: —

"Hello, captain, what sort of a stack is that? That is n't the way to stack arms. You should do it this way," and he rattled off a mass of lingo which was just Choctaw to me. I did not know the meaning at all.

What could I say? Well, I merely replied: "Don't know what you are talking about. That stack is made according to the

Tactics. That 's the way Casey makes a stack."

So, the captain repeated his explanation of how a stack should be made and left me. Then I called, "Attention, company!" Every man sprang into line. "Take Arms!" It was done. We went on, and repeated the same thing, as though nothing had been said about it. We made a line of stacks over and over again, until, when the drill hour was up, the company could make a good line of stacks.

However, I was in a very nervous state of mind. As soon as possible I went over to Company I's headquarters to inquire of Capt. Kendrick, for he was a "Light Infantry" man, and *well drilled*. I described, as well as I could, the stack that my brother captain had made.

"Ah," said he, "he has followed *Hardee's Tactics* and you have followed *Casey's*."

"Well, but we are drilling by *Casey's*, are we not? "

"Yes, that 's right. The army used to follow *Hardee's* and the rebels do now, hence

our army has adopted *Casey's* as our tactics."

#### OFFICERS' DRILL — THE COLONEL DECIDES.

I began to feel easier. That evening we had "Officers' Drill" in the Colonel's Marquee. After the drill was over, some one inquired of Col. Metcalf:—

"Say, Colonel, which sort of a stack shall we make, Casey's or Hardee's?" Then came a long discussion. Some preferring Hardee's and some Casey's. Arguments were given in favor of one and the other, until the matter was again referred to the colonel for his decision.

Col. Metcalf squirted his tobacco juice, cleared his throat and quietly said:—

"Well, gentlemen, if we are following Casey, I suppose we 'd better follow Casey."

#### CAPTAIN DRILLS "STACK ARMS" BY CASEY.

The next afternoon, all the companies were drilling in making stacks. And my friend and brother captain had to learn the Casey stack and teach his company how to make it.

You may easily imagine the effect of this episode on my reputation.

That captain and I became fast friends and our friendship lasted till his death—only a few years ago. He was a good man and had an unusually useful life.

#### COMPANY K, 11TH R. I. V.

Let me pause here to speak of my company — Company K.

Observe, this was one of the three companies recruited in Providence by the Christian Association. In the city of Providence seven companies were raised, and the other companies were from the towns of North Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls and Smithfield.

I have before me my *Descriptive Roll Book*. I find that the ninety-nine enlisted men gave as their regular business forty-five different answers. Just consider what that means. Forty-five different kinds of business followed by ninety-nine men. I take pleasure in here transcribing the different branches of industry followed by these ninety-nine men .

## COMPANY K'S OCCUPATIONS.

In Company K, 11th R. I. V., the ninety-nine enlisted men gave their regular business as follows:—

Thirteen carpenters, ten students, eight clerks, six machinists, five farmers, four shoemakers, three mechanics, three moulders, two masons, two oystermen, two silversmiths, two blindmakers, two sailors, two expressmen, two wheelwrights, two printers, two weavers, two bakers, one rigger, one wiremaker, one stonecutter, one teamster, one bobbin turner, one paperhanger, one filecutter, one wireworker, one file maker, one sailmaker, one engineer, one switchman, one upholsterer, one cabinetmaker, one merchant, one fireman, one doctor, one edge-tool worker, one jeweler, one blacksmith, one car painter, one apothecary, one overseer, one organ builder, one musician, one tailor, one painter — forty-five kinds of business.

## REGIMENTAL STATISTICS.

The following statistics of the 11th Regiment, R. I. Vounteer Infantry, in the Civil War, 1863, were taken by a noted genealo-

gist, Mr. Newman, in our camp on Miner's Hill, Va.:—

	REG.	CO. K.
Artists . . . . .	* 16	1
The Professions . . . . .	16	2
Painters . . . . .	20	3
Teachers and Students..	57	13
Manufacturers . . . . .	126	6
Traders . . . . .	23	1
Clerks . . . . .	83	8
Laborers . . . . .	79	0
Mechanics . . . . .	358	41
*Miscellaneous . . . . .	223	26
Native Born . . . . .	778	75
Foreign Born . . . . .	224	26
Married . . . . .	483	49
Unmarried . . . . .	519	52
Living Children . . . . .	965	95
Whole Number of Men..	1002	101

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\*Farmers, Sailors, Butchers, Fishermen, etc.

These statistics are well worth our study. The comparison of the record of Company K with the entire regiment is interesting. It will be observed that the number of "teachers and students" in our company is more than twice the average for the regiment. The number of "mechanics" is larger than the

average, while the number of tradesmen is large and the number of trades represented is very large. On the other hand, while in the regiment seventy-nine men gave their occupation as "laborers," not one such is found in Company K!

The number of foreign born in the regiment is a trifle over twenty-five per cent. and in Company K the same.

#### A BRICK OVEN — BAKED BEANS.

One day in the Fall of 1862, Capt. Kendrick called his men — Company I — into line and marched them off about three miles, armed with their knapsack straps only. They halted by the side of the ruins of a house that had been burned. The bricks from the fallen chimney were scattered about. The captain directed his men to select four bricks each, and buckle the two straps around them. This being done, the order came: "Shoulder bricks," "Forward march!" Back to camp they came and dumped the bricks just on the line next to Company K. Then several men of Company K dug a trench about two feet wide and six feet long, when my best *stone*



*mason*, Amos Lee, took his trowel and laid a brick arch, built a little chimney at one end, arranging for a door at the other, *and*, we were all prepared to have *Boston Baked Beans* for the two companies every Saturday night.

### THE STORY OF A CHAPLAIN.

There was a chaplain in a regiment, encamped not far from us, when we were on Miner's Hill, who wanted to resign and go home. But, he felt quite certain that his resignation would not be accepted. Hence a plan to bring about the desired result.

One Monday evening a rap came upon the door of my cottage, and on opening the door I found Lieut. Colonel Pitman and another officer, who was at once introduced to me as Chaplain Blank from the Blank Regiment, who wanted to find a young man from Warwick, R. I. The chaplain had called on the colonel to inquire for Private Greene and the adjutant had found that he was in my company. Hence the colonel had brought him over and introduced him to me.

I invited him in, and he entered. I gave

him a chair and conversation began. He made no further inquiry for Greene, and, so far as I know, did not find him while in the army.

I recall much of the conversation, which interested me and my lieutenants greatly. It was extremely original and piquant. Among other things, we were talking of the war, its causes and its probable results. Now, Mr. Blank was a whole-souled anti-slavery man, pronounced in his opinions, but he told us that the war had nothing to do with the slavery question. "Why, then, chaplain, did you leave your church and join the army?"

"Be obedient to the Powers that be. The Powers that be are ordained of God." This he repeated — always with the same words: "Be obedient to the Powers that be. The Powers that be are ordained of God." The rebels had violated this command and must be subdued.

He stayed till nearly twelve o'clock, and when he rose to leave, I told him we had greatly enjoyed his call and hoped he would come again.

"Come again? Come again? Do you

mean it?" I assured him we did mean it, and hoped he would call often.

"I 'll come again. Yes, I 'll come again, on one condition."

"What 's that?"

"It is that when I 've stayed long enough you 'll kick me out."

"Certainly, chaplain, we 'll agree to that."

"Well, then, I 'll come again."

The next evening he was there, and stayed late, and the next, and he came every evening during that week, and then we saw no more of him.

What did it all mean? We did not know. He had never mentioned Greene's name and really there seemed to us no particular reason for those six consecutive visits. And what had become of him?

All this was a mystery to us, till we chanced to hear that the chaplain had resigned, his resignation had been accepted and he was back in his home, again ministering to his church.

The information that came to us, with

such explanations as evidently applied to the case may be stated as follows:—

#### MEANS TO AN END.

Some time after that famous week, there came to my ears an explanation of the chaplain's affairs. It appeared that during the despondency of that summer of 1862, like a great many others all over the loyal states, Mr. Blank, swayed by a strong feeling of loyalty to the great Republic and the cause of Union, offered himself to the government and was appointed chaplain of the regiment, took the field and was stationed near Miner's Hill. But, after spending four months there, the monotony was so great and the needs of his church so pressing that he strongly wanted to resign.

I suppose many right here would say: "Well, why did n't he resign?" Simply because he knew that his resignation would not be accepted. Hence he must find, or create, circumstances which would secure its acceptance. Hence, he laid a plan, which he felt reasonably sure would bring about his discharge from the service.

## THE CHAPLAIN'S SERMON.

Sunday came, and the regiment was drawn up for divine service. Mr. Blank took for his text the story of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:3. But Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

The sermon began with a dissertation upon the sin of falsehood, and that it was a common sin. Moreover, the army was not free from it. The argument was continued something after this fashion:—

"This regiment is a part of the army and this regiment is not without sin.

"But, why should I preach to you upon this sin. Lying is common among you. You all lie. You are so accustomed to lying that you scarcely recognize it. The privates lie to each other and to the officers, every day. The sergeants lie habitually. Each day, at Dress Parade, the first sergeants come forward, salute and say: 'Company A all present or accounted for,' when he knows that three or four men are off somewhere, on

a drunk. The captains lie systematically. Each month they must render an account to Washington of all their equipments and government property in their possession. But there are some things unaccounted for, and they say, *under oath*, that they were lost in the march, or were taken by the enemy, when they know it is a lie.

“Or, take the case of the colonel”:—

THE COLONEL A MEMBER OF THE ANANIAS  
SOCIETY.

He is a lawyer. He has a case in court. He wishes leave of absence to try the case. He asks for it and it is refused. What does he do? He goes to Washington, exchanges his colonel's uniform for citizen's clothes, travels to his home, looks after the case, returns to Washington, dons his uniform, joins his regiment, and at the end of the month makes his oath that he has been on duty during the entire month.”

It is not difficult to suppose that the chaplain would find some place outside of his regiment to spend the evenings of that week, which he did in the headquarters of Company

K, 11th R. I.. It is also easy to imagine that his resignation would be promptly accepted, which was the case.

Of course, I cannot vouch for the truth of this report, but it is here given as the story was told, shortly after the chaplain had left the regiment. If it is a correct version of what happened, it certainly shows Chaplain Blank as represented in one large, American encyclopedia as "noted for his eccentricities and for his broad, practical philanthropy." This incident clearly shows that he was eccentric, and from personal knowledge I can vouch for his "broad, practical philanthropy."

### PICKET DUTY.

The life on picket often had its adventures. We were on Miner's Hill nearly three months and about once a week Company K was detailed for picket duty. We always had the same picket line. It was on the Kirby cross-road and the main road that ran from Falls Church to Lewinsville.

I well remember the first time we picketed this line. In the afternoon a chaplain from

some nearby regiment rode up and presented his pass to go through our picket lines.

The sergeant referred the matter to me. His pass was hardly correct, and I made careful inquiries, for the picket lines should be rigidly guarded.

#### THE WOODWORTH FAMILY.

He told me he wanted to visit a Union family just outside of our lines. It was the family of a Mr. Woodworth, who had come to Virginia from New York state. They were Presbyterians and thoroughly Union. I passed him through the lines and on his return a couple of hours later he told me about the Woodworth family and advised me to go out and call on them.

The next time we were on picket, Lieut. Edwards and I went out in the afternoon to see if we could find them.

Having passed our last post, we scanned the houses. The first one had a broken-down fence, pigs in the front yard and generally a careless, slovenly appearance. I said to Lieut. Edwards, "No, not that house for a Union family from New York."



The next was one of the same sort. Finally, we came to a modest, one-story cottage, with green blinds, a neat porch in front, a nice lawn, curtains at the windows. I said, "Ah! that has a Northern look. Let's inquire." I rapped on the door. A young lady opened the door and as I looked in I instantly saw several things that I had not seen before in Virginia. The homes we had been in had been the homes of small farmers, poorly furnished and generally dilapidated. Here for the first time since crossing the Potomac I saw a lady with her hair properly combed and a white collar about her neck. Here I saw a carpet on the floor, paper on the walls, a heating stove in the sitting room, and a cabinet organ next the wall.

"Yes, this was Mr. Woodworth's," and this was Miss Woodworth. We had a very pleasant call and later made other visits, not infrequently.

#### VISIT TO THE WOODWORTHS.

We told such stories about the Woodworths that one evening Captain Kendrick, Lieut. Snow, and Sergeant Simmons, accom-



OAK COTTAGE.

Headquarters Co. K. 11th R. I. V., Miner's Hill, Virginia, 1862-4.



panied Lieut. Edwards and myself on a visit to the Woodworth home. We had the countersign and with it properly given at each post we passed the pickets, soon after sunset, and reached the Woodworth place early in the evening. We had supper. Ah! that white tablespread! Biscuits right from the oven, white, palatable, nourishing. It seemed *like home*. Before leaving we sang "The Star Spangled Banner," "The Sword of Bunker Hill," "America," and other patriotic songs, accompanied by the melodion, skillfully played by Miss Woodworth. We all enjoyed a call at the Woodworths whenever we had an opportunity.

#### MR. WOODWORTH'S EXPERIENCE.

Mr. Woodworth, on one occasion, was prevailed on to tell me his experience, when he fell into the hands of the rebel army. I think it was during the first year of the war, after the Bull Run battle. The rebels held all that territory where he lived and the Union families, so far as possible, left their homes and went within the Union lines. He and his family went to Georgetown.

A little later the Confederates were driven away and everything was peaceful in that section. So, one day he thought he would go out to his home (about ten miles) and see how everything was. He called on one family — members of the same church with him — and found no man there, and that the family had no firewood at their home. He took their horse and farm wagon and brought them a load of wood from the woods where it had been corded. Then he had dinner and after that went out to the barn. As he stood in the barn door he spied some rebel cavalry coming up the road. Not supposing that they had seen him he secreted himself till they should have passed by. They had seen him, and hence they stopped at the barn and hunted till they found him. They at once took him prisoner and carried him to Vienna, where a small rebel force was stationed. From there he was sent by rail to Richmond. After being held a prisoner for about six weeks, no charge being made against him he was set at liberty. But, what was he to do? He had no means of transportation, and being an elderly man and some-

what rheumatic he could scarcely walk from Richmond to his home.

However, he watched for an opportunity and when he found a railroad train going north he entered a car and rode until they put him off. Then he would walk on till he found another train, on which he would ride till he was again put off. In this way he reached Vienna, only a few miles from his home. Here the rebel forces detained him. He was obliged to shift for himself, get what he could to eat, and sleep where he could, often on the bare ground. When he had been in this condition a few weeks, one day a Union battery was planted at Lewinsville, near his home, and began to shell the rebels near Vienna. All guards were called in and the troops skedaddled. Now was Mr. Woodworth's chance. He availed himself of the opportunity and was soon at his own home.

The old man told me that he never stole anything but once. At one time in Richmond it was his duty to carry to the cook potatoes for cooking. He was nearly starved. Those raw potatoes looked so tempting to him that

he put a few in his pocket and afterwards ate them *raw*.

### KEEPING WARM ON PICKET.

Our picket duty on this line was performed in November, December and January. It was cold weather. After our first assignment to this line, whenever we went out, every set of six men always wanted the same post they previously had occupied.

On one occasion after the picket mounting when we started for the picket line, I observed that one set of men carried with them a pickax, a crowbar, shovels and other tools. I said to them: "What are you going to do with your tools, build a railroad?" "We'll show you, captain." As soon as they were located those not on duty began work. Their post was on the country road, in the middle of a valley. The cold wind would sweep down through that valley, and they had no protection — no trees, no shelter.

Well, those boys suffered with cold feet and cold hands. Hence, they dug out a trench about six or eight feet long, on one side of the road, built up a stone wall nearly

two feet high on either side of the trench, covered it over with flat stones, put earth on top of these stones and built a chimney at one end. Here, then, they had a furnace for heating the surface of the ground. They kept a good fire all day with rails found near by, and at night they banked the fire, stopped up the chimney and were ready for the cold night winds. The men on duty would pursue their beat, stopping midway over this underground fire and get comfortably warm, continue the beat, return to the center, again stop and get warm, and then keep repeating the operation. No fire was visible during the night, but the bed of coals would continue to give heat till morning dawned.

#### MECHANICS HALL.

On another occasion as we started for the picket line *another* set of men carried similar tools, and I wondered what was in the wind this time. Their post was where the country road was cut across a side hill. The boys took their shovels and pick and dug into the hillside, carving out a room some eight feet square. They made a flat roof of rails laid



close together, which they covered with earth and bushes. The front, next to the road, they closed up with rails, leaving a door at one corner, and hung their rubber blankets on the inside, so that no light could be seen from the outside. At the rear end they dug out a fireplace, with the ground over it so removed as to make a chimney. Here they built a fire, which warmed the room nicely, even in the coldest weather. Here when off duty they slept in real comfort.

I could tell of many devices ingeniously planned by the boys by which they secured comfort even in performing the severest duties.

### THE STUART FAMILY.

Our outermost post on the road towards Lewinsville was directly opposite the house of a Mr. Stuart. The Stuarts were called by the boys "Secesh." Their house was back from the road a considerable distance. Mrs. Stuart was a sister of Jackson who shot Colonel Ellsworth in Alexandria. The boys cherished the idea that the rebels visited the Stuarts to receive information concerning

our troops and what they were doing. Hence, I placed an additional post in the field in the rear of the Stuart house. That night in going "grand rounds" I came to this post at about three o'clock. The boys told me that everything was quiet at the house — no disturbance. I left the post on my return, and as I passed the corner of the house I observed some one coming up towards the house from the woods beyond. Of course I fancied at once a rebel spy. Instantly I whipped out my revolver. Then the object was so obscure I thought I would get a little nearer. I advanced a short distance toward the stranger, while he came on very cautiously and very slowly. Still, I thought I must approach nearer. I did so, when, all at once, it dawned upon me, that the object before me was not a rebel, not a man, but it was old Stuart's white horse grazing in the field of grass.

Hence, I avoided rousing the entire picket line by a shot from my revolver.

But I must hasten. I have neither time nor space to give a further history of what happened on Miner's Hill, nor need I rehearse our experiences at the Convalescent

Camp, or at the Distribution Camp, suffice it to say that we left Miner's Hill on the 14th of January, 1863, and on February 30, two companies (C and K) moved over to Distribution Camp. On April 16 our regiment took the steamer Hero at Alexandria for Norfolk, and arrived at Suffolk the next day by rail. Our camp was there from April 17 till June 19, when we left Suffolk, and on the next day, June 20, arrived at Yorktown, "on the Peninch."

#### LONGSTREET BESEIGES SUFFOLK.

In the spring of 1863 Longstreet with some thirty or forty thousand men was withdrawn from Lee's army and marched via Petersburg to the Blackwater river and Suffolk. He reached Suffolk about the 12th of April, and at once swung out a battery of artillery on the slope opposite South Quay Battery and opened fire.

Just here occurred a little incident, worth relating.

#### CROW'S NEST IN THE PINE TREE.

Near the summit of that slope, and just

in front of the woods was a tall pine tree, which our forces had trimmed up and near the top had built a platform, or "Crow's Nest," for use as a signal station. When the advance guard of Longstreet's army came in sight the signal officer in that tree at once saw them, caught up his flag and signalled the advance of the enemy. The signal officer in town instantly saw it and responded. The long roll beat and in less than five minutes South Quay Battery was ready for defence. No sooner had Longstreet's forces appeared than the guns of our battery opened a brisk fire upon them and soon drove them off under cover of the dense woods.

Meanwhile, as soon as that signal officer had received recognition from the signal station in the town he ran down the ladder, jumped upon his horse and cantered away inside of our lines. He was fired at by Longstreet's men, but was not hit, and in a very few minutes was safe behind our breast works.

#### LONGSTREET'S STORY OF THE PINE TREE.

Longstreet, in his history of the war, en-

titled "From Manassas to Appomattox," tells another incident concerning this signal station. He says: "To gratify his curiosity a Confederate soldier climbed to the staging and seated himself for a leisurely view of the Federal forces inside their works. An artillerist of the other side trained one of his rifle guns upon the platform and sent a shell screaming and bursting too near for the comfort of the man up a tree. As he did not care to be seen in precipitate retreat, he thought to wait a little, but a second shot admonished him that hurry, if less graceful, might be more wise than deliberate retreat. Acting under pressure of the situation, his legs, to the amusement of the men on both sides, soon brought him to safe cover. When night closed in over the belligerents this soldier went to work on a scheme by which he hoped to get even with the Yankees. He carefully constructed and equipped a full-sized man, dressed in a new suit of 'butternut colored' dry-goods and in due form christening him 'Julius Cæsar,' took him to the platform, adjusted him to a graceful position and made him secure to the platform by strong cords.

A little after sunrise 'Julius Cæsar' was discovered by some of the Federal battery officers, who prepared for the target, so inviting to skillful practice. The new soldier sat under the hot fire with irritating indifference, until the Confederates, not able to restrain their hilarity exposed the joke by calling for 'Three cheers for Julius Cæsar.' The other side quickly recognized the situation and good-naturedly added to ours their cheers for the old hero."

#### ANOTHER CROW'S NEST.

These two incidents relate to the Crow's Nest in the tall pine tree, near the summit of the slope from the western woods down to the Nansemond River. There is another Crow's Nest, which Uncle Sam's boys had put up among the branches of the "wide-spreading" oak tree just in the rear of South Quay Battery, facing the tall pine crow's nest.

After the advent of Longstreet's corps at Suffolk, the Confederate soldiers just honey-combed with rifle pits that long slope running from the tall pine down to the Nansemond

River. There all day they grasped their telescopic rifles, ready to "pop" at any Yankee head they might see.

One day Lieut. Thurber and myself walked over from our camp on the Suffolk North Front to South Quay Battery on the West Front, ran up the ladder to the crow's nest in the broad oak, to view those rifle pits. We had not been there long before we saw a puff of smoke from a rifle pit away on our right. We both dodged behind the plank till we heard the ball "pim" by. Soon after we saw another puff of smoke from a pit directly in our front. We dodged down behind the planks and the ball went by — "pim." Shortly after that we saw another and another, till it seemed that we two Yankees were the target of all the rifles on that broad side-hill.

I suggested to the lieutenant that we had better seek quarters below, where we could not be seen by those rebel sharpshooters. In passing down the ladder the board set up edgewise on the front side of the ladder hid our bodies. Half way down a large branch of the oak obliged that board shield to be cut



*Photo by Brady*

Captain Mowry.





off, and another started just below the limb. There was a short space where the sharp shooters could see us descending. When my head was just below that spot and the lieutenant's feet just above a rebel ball came through that open space with its well-known "pim." Had that rebel fired that ball a few seconds earlier, doubtless I should not be writing these desultory anecdotes today.

#### LONGSTREET LEAVES US.

It was about the first week in May that the battle of Chancellorsville took place, and Lee, anticipating another attack from Hooker, telegraphed to Longstreet to bring up his forces as soon as possible. I think it was on Sunday, May 3, the rebels were in there places as usual and on the next day, Monday, they were gone.

#### LONG MARCHES.

The 11th R. I. Regiment did good service to our government for the next six weeks in several marches of our troops into the enemy's territory, once as far as to Franklin on the Blackwater, and over towards Peters-

burg as far as Zuni Station in Isle of Wight County. We took up the rails from some twenty-five or thirty miles of track on the Welden Railroad and the Petersburg road, good English T-rails of great value, the best I had seen at that day, and sent them to Norfolk for the benefit of the government.

At one time, near Zuni, Company K had as much of a skirmish as the 11th saw in the entire campaign. It was on this wise:—

#### COMPANY K GOES ON PICKET AT NIGHT.

On the evening of the 22nd of May, about nine o'clock, the men of Company K had turned in, having wrapped themselves in their blankets, on the ground, when the sergeant major brought me the order to form company and march out for picket duty.

By ten o'clock that night we marched nearly a mile to the front, and relieved the men of Company F, Captain Taft, who had been on picket that day. The picket posts were in two divisions. Our first platoon was posted along the main road leading from Windsor to Zuni and on towards Petersburg. The second platoon, under Lieut. Thurber, was posted along a cross road on

the left of our innermost post. My outermost post was behind a large tree at the further extremity of the heavy woods. Just beyond that post, in a clump of bushes and young trees was the advanced picket post of the rebel troops—not more than about fifty yards distant.

Imagine our position, placed on picket in the enemy's country in the darkness of the night, in a line where we were total strangers—a place we had never seen before, and in close proximity to the enemy's pickets. By the time all of the posts had been found and all the men put on duty, it was midnight. From that hour till three o'clock I spent the time in going "grand rounds." I visited every post of both platoons, and gave special orders to the men of the front post—so near the rebel pickets. There I left sergeant Viall and Corporal Lauder with four trusty men. Then at three o'clock I went back to the innermost post, where Capt. Parkhurst with Company C was stationed as my support and lay down under Captain Parkhurst's blanket. I took a short sleep and at the first dawn of the morning light I was up and went out to

Sergeant Viall's post. I inquired of him about the rebel picket post. He replied that they had been there all night, but he had heard nothing of them for about an hour. "Have you been across the road, sergeant?" "No, indeed, we have kept behind these trees."

"Well, let us draw their fire." I walked across the road. No response. The sergeant and one or two men went across. No result. Then we crossed and recrossed. About this time, when it was fully day light, a solitary cavalry man came riding up from the rear and questioned us. I gave him all the information I could, and his reply was:—

"We 'll soon see where they are," and taking his breech-loading carbine in his hand, and putting spurs to his horse, went cantering up the road for a quarter of a mile or so. On his return he said to me: "No rebels anywhere near you." There was a heavy dew upon the ground, and as we went out to the spot which the enemy's picket had occupied during the night we could see by their tracks in the dew which way they had gone. This was off through the woods to my left. Ser-

geant Viall and the cavalryman followed their route through the woods to the cross road beyond my picket line.

### A QUIET FORENOON.

We passed a very quiet forenoon. No enemy appeared. I pushed my pickets out beyond the woods, into the open ground, establishing one post directly in front of the old front post, behind the corner of a Virginia fence, and another off to the right flank, near where a house and barn had been burned, and not far from the front of a large apple orchard, with tall grass.

That forenoon will be remembered by all the boys in my platoon as long as they remember any incident of the war. They flourished around everywhere.

A regimental order but recently promulgated forbade any killing of "hog or hogs, pig or pigs." But, on that forenoon a solitary pig appeared wandering around on the open grounds. The temptation for "fresh pork" was too great.

The boys chased the pig until finally it was bayoneted and soon was well dressed

and hung up on a tree. Scarcely had that job been finished when Colonel Church rode out to inspect the picket line. He saw the fresh pork hanging from the tree. He at once addressed Sergeant Viall: "Sergeant, did you kill that pig?"

"No, sir, he ran on my bayonet. Have a piece, Colonel?"

The colonel did not look displeased, but put on a broad grin and rode off.

### THE SKIRMISH.

After the midday lunch I went the rounds and said, to each group: "Boys, we *may not* see the rebels here, but if we do, it will be within the next three hours. You had all best to keep very quiet at your posts. No running around. Let all be quiet and all the men keep out of sight at your posts."

Never did soldiers obey orders better. Between two and three o'clock I rested back by the grounds where Captain Parkhurst with Company C was acting as my reserve. At three o'clock I heard a shot from our front

post, back of a corner of the Virginia fence. Immediately I ran out to that post to see what it meant. Soon the firing became brisk, as we saw the rebels, company after company, crossing the road about six hundred yards from the front picket post.

Not long after I heard a musket from the post at our right, near the apple orchard.

Instantly, I ran back to the next post and ordered Billy Hicks to go down to that right post and see what the firing meant. I greatly feared we were flanked. Billy was to return as soon as possible and inform me.

However, before he could have reached the post an unearthly rebel yell was heard, when suddenly we saw a squadron of cavalry with two howitzers come prancing down the hill, and three companies of infantry sprang up from the tall grass in the orchard on our right, with three companies from the bushes that hid a lane on our left, both on the double quick. The men on picket obeyed orders and ran to the barricade in the woods, as I had directed them, in case of an attack to rally



on the barricade. The rebels came on as far as the edge of the woods, just in sight of the barricade. There they halted and kept up a continuous firing. During the previous night we had succeeded in cutting down three large pine trees, two on one side of the road and one from the other. These had been fallen directly across the road to prevent any cavalry or artillery getting past.

Just at this time — when the entire company had assembled at the barricade and were keeping up a continuous fire upon the rebels, who had come within firing distance for infantry, — all at once I heard a volley and a command. I felt sure that command was from our colonel. I knew his voice, or thought I did. At once I interpreted the movement in this way:

Colonel Church had double-quickened our regiment from the rear, had gone past us, on our right, through a cartpath, next to the location of the 26th Michigan, had emerged from the woods and was chasing the rebels. Lieut. Thurber was forming company. I wanted Company K to have a hand in the

movement, hence I dodged around the barricades, through the thick woods, and coming out into the road, stopped and looked to see where the colonel and our regiment were located. As I quickly glanced up the road before me I saw soldiers, drawn up in column by platoons. But I instantly perceived that they were not "blue-coats"; they were "gray-backs"!

Quick as a flash they raised their guns. Quicker than a flash I dropped, flat in the gutter. More than a hundred muskets, in a volley, were fired at me. They were standing on ground a few feet higher than where I was and only about fifty or sixty yards from me. Every bullet passed over my head, and before they could load again I was out of sight in the woods, and quickly made my way back to my company behind the barricade. There I found that the firing was so brisk that Captain Parkhurst had ordered his men to lie down flat behind the stone wall. I had been fired at by six companies of skirmishers from Alabama and Mississippi regiments and had escaped unhurt.

Soon the rebels were driven back and we heard no more of them.

#### MARCH TO WINDSOR STATION.

Earlier in the day we had been ordered to move to Windsor station, a distance of about three miles, but the day was so excessively hot that the order was not obeyed till after sunset. On that march our regiment formed the rear of the line and Company K was the rear-guard with one gattling gun between us and the rebels. That march of three miles was through a dense wood, which had been set on fire the day before and was still burning.

Not a single man of our regiment was either killed or wounded by the rebels, but we took several rebel prisoners, who reported that we had shot six of their men.

An account of this march and of the skirmish was written by some member of the 26th Michigan for their "Camp Journal." In the main it is truthful and accurate. Of course, the writer was not fully posted as to our 11th Regiment, but told the story as he understood it. We take pleasure in

quoting it entire. The whole article is as follows:—

### OUR CAMP JOURNAL

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..NO PEACE WHILE TRAITORS ARE IN ARMS!..

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Headquarters 26th Michigan Infantry, Camp  
Suffolk, Va., June 5th, 1863.

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### OUR EXPEDITION TOWARD THE BLACKWATER.

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On Saturday, the 18th of May, with the exception of the 130th N. Y., was ordered to the “Deserted House” in the direction of the Blackwater, to assist in protecting the workmen who were engaged in taking up the rails of the Portsmouth, Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad. Two brigades, under the command of Colonels Wardrop of the 99th and Murphy of the 69th N. Y. had preceded us. On their arrival at the Deserted House, Colonel Farrar of the 26th Michigan was placed in command of our Brigade, consisting of 11th R. I., 152d N. Y., 167th Pennsylvania, and 26th Michigan. Nothing of moment

occurred at this point, save the maturing of plans and concentration of all forces under General Corcoran for an expedition out on the Norfolk, Petersburg, and Richmond Railroad. We were, however, interested in the historic and legendary associations of the

#### DESERTED HOUSE.

It was the scene of the famous Nat Turner's negro insurrection in 1830, and the consequent hanging of more than fifty negroes. Soon after these occurrences the house was deserted, under the impression that it was haunted. Since then it has been the subject of wild and vague superstitions among the inhabitants of this entire region. Mrs. Stowe immortalizes it in her story of "Dred," and Mrs. Southworth has made it the basis of an interesting work of fiction. Several battles have been fought here during the present war, as the scarred and broken orchards and forest, the fragments of shell, the skeletons of artillery-horses attest. The house was smouldering in ruins on our arrival, having been burned the previous day by some rude vandal, and nothing remains

but the lone chimneys and desolate fields to mark the scene of two dark tragedies. The raising of the Seaboard track being accomplished, the advanced forces fell back to our position; and on Wednesday, the 19th, the entire force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery under command of General Corcoran, — the infantry, under command of Acting Brigadier General Wardrop — moved to

#### WINDSOR,

on the line of the Norfolk and Richmond Railroad. On Friday the 3d Brigade, under command of Colonel Farrar, was advanced four miles beyond Windsor, to protect the workment on the extreme front. The position occupied was on a large plantation near

#### ANTIOCH CHURCH.

to the left of the railroad. The 153d N. Y. was posted on the right to prevent a flank movement of the enemy, the 11th R. I. on the left, and the 26th Michigan, with a section of the 4th regular artillery, under Lieut. Thompson, in the center; besides these, a squadron of the 11th Pennsylvania cavalry

acted as pickets and scouts upon the outposts, the whole under direction of Brigadier General Dodge. About noon the cavalry scouts reported the approach of the enemy's cavalry on the road in front of our center. A strong picket force from the 11th Rhode Island was thrown out on the left a little into the woods, and on the right Lieuts. Dopson and Gibbs with Company C from the 28th Michigan. All through the afternoon picket firing was kept up all along the line. Gardner Matthews, of Company C, shot a Mississippian through the head, killing him instantly. He was brought into Colonel Farrar's quarters the next morning and decently buried. The rebel deserters who came in on Saturday morning report a loss of seven killed and wounded on the line of our pickets. During the forenoon of Saturday everything was quiet, but at four o'clock P.M. the rebels commenced firing on our pickets, and in a few moments the entire line was engaged in a brisk skirmish with the enemy. At six o'clock a large force of the enemy's cavalry dismounted, and with rapid firing and loud yells charged upon Captains

Parkhurst and Mowry's right, and Lieut. Parker's left. The firing of the enemy becoming too hot for our little force of skirmishers, Captain Thrasher of the 11th was sent with his command to the support of Parkhurst and Mowry, and Captain Culver of the 26th, with a part of Company E, to the support of Parker. As soon as Captain Culver had reached the scene of action, he placed his men in Lieut. Parker's command, who immediately ordered an advance into the woods, when Captain Culver fell mortally wounded. Lieut. Parker bound up the wound, gave him some spirits, and sent him to the rear. About this time Lieut. Thompson opened upon the enemy with shell from his ten-pounders, and forced him to leave the ground. It is most remarkable, that no one, save Captain Culver, was injured on our side through all this fighting, which lasted for more than two hours. It is owing, doubtless, to the excellent management of our forces by Captains Parkhurst and Mowry, and Lieut. Parker, who kept their men under cover of the large pines, and ordered them to fire only when they could distinctly see the enemy.



The rebels undertook to play their old game of throwing a half a dozen times our number on our weakest and most exposed points, but the steady and accurate fire of our men held them in check until our battery opened, when they were forced to give way. Several officers from the 11th and our own regiments showed great coolness and bravery in facing a perfect storm of rebel bullets, when occasion required them, in the vicinity of the fight. It is not doubted by those who are acquainted with the facts, that at least twenty to thirty of the enemy were killed and wounded.

Captain Parkhurst's men brought in two prisoners. The boys of Companies A and E, as also the 11th R. I., fought splendidly, and speak in the highest terms of Captains Parkhurst and Mowry, and Lieuts. Parker and Underhill. We were eighty rods to the right and rear of Company A, on picket with Captain Dailey and Company G, and could distinctly hear Parkhurst and Parker giving commands. It was noticeable throughout the whole affair that our men reposed the utmost confidence in Colonels Farrar and Church. Under such commanders, men are invincible.

Captain Burch, acting colonel; Captain Lothian, acting major; Lieut. Church, A. A. Adt. Gen.; Lieut. Alexander, A. D. C.; Lieut. Hadley, Acting Adjt., and Sergt. Howard, of the 26th, also the field and staff of the 11th, were prompt in executing general and regimental orders, and cannot be too highly commended.

General Dodge had made such disposition of other forces during the day that we felt secure in our position.

Colonel Farrar directed personally all our movements. Not a thing occurred to mar our success in this affair, and but for the wounding of Captain Culver, not a heart saddened among all our forces. When we remember that it was only on Saturday that we saw him in health and vigor, moving over the plain to the support of our little force of skirmishers, we can hardly realize that he has left us. He died on Sunday, the 24th, from the effects of his wound. We had received orders early in the day to withdraw our forces and at dark march back to Windsor, having accomplished the work for which we were sent.

On Sunday, at 2 o'clock, we were ordered to Philips' Mills, five miles down the railroad in the direction of Suffolk, where we encamped until Tuesday, at 2 P.M., when we were ordered again to march. At midnight we had recrossed the Nansemond, and (thank God and General Peck!) found ourselves once more in our old camp. Everything has been done to the satisfaction of those in command. Nearly forty miles of the finest railroad track in Virginia has been raised and placed beyond rebel reach. A good deal of skirmishing has occurred in which the enemy has been worsted. We have traveled over forty miles of sandy road, choking with dust and half overcome with heat, spoiled several gallons of good 'applejack,' lived well, got well jaded, and are in Suffolk again, with the advantage of many new experiences."

#### MILLS BARRETT'S PLANTATION.

On the next day, Sunday, May 24, about the middle of the day, we marched from Windsor Station about three miles, to Mills Barrett's farm. On our arrival there, we found that Mr. Barrett had twenty-three

slaves. When we left on Tuesday following there were remaining only Uncle Ben and Aunt Lucy, an aged couple. All the others had left the plantation and gone into Suffolk to secure their freedom.

After they had all gone, I asked Uncle Ben why he did not go.

“Well, Massa, I tell you. Dere be two reasons. Dere’s young Massa Barrett, in Norfolk, he’s de Union man. I promised him I’d stay wid old massa as long as I lib. An’ I’m goin’ to keep my promise. Den, dere’s de todder reason. You see, Massa Captain, I’s growin’ ole. So’s Lucy. We both has de rheumatiz. Here we’ll be took care of as long as we lib. Down dere, don’t know what ’ud happen. Freedom is good for de young folks, but, guess I’d better stay here.”

#### MARY AND HER CHILDREN.

Among the families of slaves was one woman (Mary) and her children. Her husband had already gone to Suffolk and Mary was anxious to join him, with her pickaninies. It happened that on Monday morning one of our government teams was going to

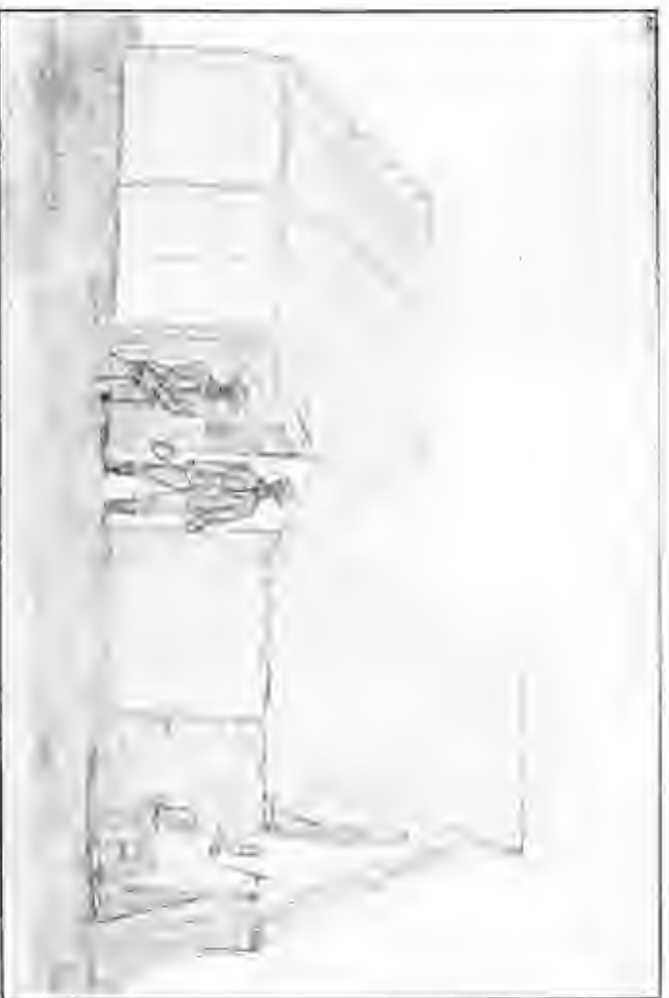
Suffolk empty. The adjutant (Robert Fessenden) and the captain of Company K laid their plans for the transportation of Mary and her family to Suffolk.

When the team was ready to start, the driver reined up to her cabin and six men of Company K were ordered by the sergeant of the guard to fall in and take arms. They did so and formed a line around the covered wagon. Six more men sprang into the cabin and loaded up Mary's household stuff, put the children — all but the baby — into the wagon, with the chairs and bed, and things, and while Mary mounted to the driver's high seat, the adjutant held the baby — a handsome little pickaninny — and then threw it up to the mother. Before he did so, however, he kissed the baby.

Instantly the team started for Suffolk.

“THERE'S MANY A SLIP.”

Now, our regular brigadier general, in command of the brigade was absent, and the command had fallen upon Colonel Blank of the —th Connecticut. We, boys of the 11th R. I., from various developments witnessed



*Profile sketch by Robert Little*  
Headquarters C.O. K. Camp Perry, Suffolk, Va. 1863.



by us, had the impression that the Connecticut regiment was largely composed of Copperheads. We also had reason to believe that disease or crime — whichever you may call it, — extended to their colonel.

At all events, soon after that team had started for Suffolk, Colonel (Blank), on learning the facts, ordered its immediate return.

Now, it is Fessenden's turn. He was flying around till he got an order to go *somewhere*. It mattered little where, provided he could get out of camp. Having obtained an order *to go*, he mounted his horse and spurred away on the road to Suffolk, upon a lively canter. He met the returning wagon opposite a large mansion of a plantation. Mary and the children were loudly boo-hoo-ing, greatly regretting to be carried back to Massa Barrett's plantation. The adjutant stopped the team, rode up to the front door of the house, and rapped loudly. The planter himself came to the door. He was an elderly man, with a head of long, browzy hair.

“Do you own this plantation? ”

“Ye'as, suppose I do.”



“Those slave quarters down yonder yours? That empty cabin?”

“Ye-as, that ’s mine, tu.”

“Well, sir, I have a family to put into that cabin, and I shall hold you responsible for their safety. Do you understand that?”

“Ye-as — reckon I du.”

“Well, sir, if anything happens to that family, — if they are disturbed in any way, — I’ll burn your house down. Do you understand that?”

“Reckon I du. Nothin’ shall disturb ’um.”

“Well, you be sure that they are kept safe from any danger.”

“I will, sah.”

Rapidly the adjutant and driver unloaded the family and the furniture, put them in the cabin and returned to camp. Our boys set up a mighty hurrah when they saw that wagon come into camp *empty*.

A few days later Mary and her children were brought into Suffolk.

#### MARY REACHES SUFFOLK.

“How did they get into Suffolk? Well,

that's an interesting story, too. On our return to camp we began to talk about getting Mary and her children into Suffolk. We could not send soldiers out on such an expedition. That was not military. At length my "John" (John Taylor, my colored cook) and "Jim" (Captain Parkhurst's servant) offered to go and get them if a team could be provided. So, the adjutant, the chaplain and Company K's captain hired a mule team and sent those two colored boys out five miles into the rebel country, at the risk of their lives, to bring to freedom that colored woman and her children.

When these two boys had agreed to undertake the enterprise, I told John that he might take my navy revolver with him. Instantly John shouted out:—

"Hi! Tink o' dat! I'll hab de captain's 'volver! Ha! ha, ha!"

An hour later John came to me with a very sober face, and said: "Cap'n, guess I better not take de 'volver. Ye see, if de rebs should find us an' I had de 'volver da 'd kill me sure. But if I'm not armed da may let me go. So I'd better not take de 'volver."

I told John I thought he was wise. They were successful in bringing Mary and her family in. They saw no rebel soldiers.

#### A HALF-WITTED POOR WHITE.

On Sunday, May 17, my company was on picket duty, some distance in front of Deserted House. One of my sergeants came to my "headquarters in the field" and told of capturing a white man and a colored boy. He said the man was either half-witted or he feigned to be. I went out to see him, and soon decided that he was one of those half-witted, poor whites. He was employed by a planter to look after his hogs, running loose in the woods. The colored boy was helping him.

I released the poor white man and then had a talk with the colored boy.

#### THE COLORED BOY, GEORGE VAUGHAN.

I found that his name was George Vaughan. He was fourteen years of age. His father was named George Vaughan and he was the oldest of seven children. The master had hired him out to this farmer, who lived

some three or four miles away. I told George that he could stay with us, go into Suffolk and have his freedom.

I was surprised to hear him promptly refuse the offer. After a time I succeeded in getting the reason. His father did not want to have the family separated. Whenever there was a chance for them all to get to Suffolk he would send for George. The following Sunday, May 24, we swung around to Mills Barrett's farm and on Monday morning before I was up George appeared inquiring for me. Just as soon as his father found that our forces were beyond his master's plantation, so that he was brought between us and Suffolk, he had sent post haste for George and George had hastened home.

As soon as I was up he found me, and how his eyes snapped. He could hardly wait to get the words out of his mouth. "Ready to go in now, Massa! Ready to go in!"

"Go in? What do you mean? Go in where?"

"Ready to go in to Suffolk. Goin' to freedom! Where's de team?"

"Team? What team?"

Then I found that George had the idea that we would furnish transportation for the family, goods and all, to Suffolk. I quickly told him that we could not do that. We could only use teams for military purposes. I inquired:—

“Has your master a horse and cart? ”

“No, Massa, no.”

“Well, has he a mule? ”

“No, no horse, no mule.”

“Has he a yoke of oxen? ”

“No, Massa. No yoke. Got a steer! ”

“Oh, you have a steer? ”

“Yes, Massa, got steer.”

“And a cart and a crooked yoke? ”

“Yes, got steer and cart and crooked yoke.”

“Well, George, you go right home and drive that steer into the woods and tie him there. Then you load up your furniture on the cart and at three o’clock this afternoon you start for Suffolk—the whole family, goods, cart, steer, crooked yoke and all. You ’ll get there all right.”

Quicker than a flash George turned and

started on the double-quick for his father's place.

GEORGE VAUGHAN, SENIOR.

At just three o'clock that afternoon that cavalcade passed our camp. There was the "steer and cart," the latter loaded to its utmost limit with bed and bedding, chairs, clothing, hoes, shovels, rakes, etc. Walking on one side the husband and father, carrying a baby, on another the wife and mother totting another, with two boys trudging along beside the father and two girls by their mother's side, with young George in the rear of the cart to see that nothing fell off from that precious load.

On the Wednesday following, our regiment was back in our quarters in Suffolk and I heard from Mr. Vaughan that he was at work, with his "steer and cart," for the government on the fortifications.

But he had no home. He was staying with his wife and children, in "Union Town,"—a bright colony of contrabands numbering over two thousand.

This colony, "Union Town," was located

on a plain, near the village of Suffolk. It consisted of a large village, compactly built of split hemlock boards, and all its inhabitants were "contrabands" who had left their masters and found refuge within our lines. Each family had built a house, and they found various kinds of work to do.

Captain Kendrick and I visited "Union Town" one afternoon. In addition to the dwelling houses, we found, in the middle of the village, a large building used on weekdays for a school-room and on Sundays for a church. Here we found about eighty scholars, learning to read and spell. They had two teachers, a man and a young woman. Both of them were only able to read, write and spell, and that with difficulty. The young woman told me that her master sent his daughter away to boarding school, and sent her with the daughter. This daughter taught her to read, so that, out of school, the slave could read to her young mistress.

The man would not tell me how he learned to read. He knew the law of Virginia forbade teaching a slave to read. But he magnified his office and at the close of school in

the afternoon he had a hymn sung and pronounced the benediction.

After a few days Mr. Vaughan went to work for himself to build a home for his precious family. At first he cut down hemlock trees and with a *frow* split out the boards. He obtained permission to erect a shanty on a spot of land near the village, and in *ten days* he had built his house and was *ready to move in*. This house I visited. It was about eighteen feet long and twelve wide, with a door and a chimney—the latter made of wood slats. Four posts at the corners, and two more in the middle of the sides, with slant roof, the whole covered with boards, split out with that heavy “frow.”

Here this black man soon located his family, so lately slaves—now *free*, with no “Massa” and no “Missus” to order them about. What a change for a family!

#### YOUNG GEORGE AGAIN.

But that young George interested me greatly. He was a bright, smart, boy. He came over to our camp now and then and I studied him carefully. I talked with the



father and urged him to let me take George home with me. It was now June and our term of enlistment expired on the first of July. He objected that it would be a break in his family. He was anxious to keep them all together. I told him that I would give him my address, and he could hear from George often, and get some one to write answers to the letters so that George could hear from him.

Finally, he consented, and we were to leave Suffolk on the 19th of June. Our regiment, with others, was ordered to Yorktown, on the peninsular.

My company marched to the railroad and there awaited orders. Now I looked for Mr. Vaughan. He nowhere appeared. After a while, however, they appeared, Mr. Vaughan, his wife and George. But he carried a very sober face. I innocently thought it was sorrow in parting with the boy. But soon he ventured to say:—

“We changed our mind. Can’t give up George. Hope you ’ll forgive me, but we can’t let him go. Ef he go ’way up Norf,

afraid I lose track er him. Reckon we must keep him home.”

So, there was nothing for me to do but to acquiesce in the parental judgment. Ah! But what a life problem is here pictured! A sudden transition of a family of nine persons from slavery to freedom. A strong family affection, an unusual enterprise in finding — no, making — a home for them, and this wholesome desire to keep the family united!

But, we must be brief. Many matters are hastening fast. On the first of July our time would be up, the nine months for which we enlisted would be ended.

#### OFF TO YORKTOWN AND WILLIAMSBURG.

Again, as Longstreet’s whole force had left us and joined Lee, our services were no longer needed at Suffolk.

Still further, as Lee with his large army was starting for Pennsylvania, the authorities at Washington determined to make a feint on Richmond. Hence the 11th R. I. with other regiments were to be transferred to the Peninsula. Thus it was that our regiment left Suffolk on the 19th of June, went

by rail to Norfolk, and embarked on the *Maple Leaf* for Yorktown.

On the 22nd, in company with many other regiments we left Yorktown and marched — in light marching order — to Williamsburg. We bivouacked in a grass field that night and the next day the different companies were distributed to Fort Magruder and the eight redoubts, located a mile or more east of the town. There we remained a week. While in this location we had short rations, and, as we left our extra baggage and equipments at Yorktown, the commissioned officers were in a desperate plight. We did get potatoes and once or twice some fresh meat. My servant, John Taylor, found a broken fry-pan in which he managed to fry meat and raw potatoes. These were placed on a piece of board, about twelve inches long and four wide, brought to the captain's headquarters, and placed on a table. We used our pocket knives and a sharpened stick instead of the usual knife and fork. Coffee was made in a pint tin cup, out of which we, the captain and two lieutenants, drank.

## THE MAJOR'S PASS TO WILLIAMSBURG.

One day, the major rode up to our redoubt and — we being very hungry — I asked him to give Lieut. Thurber and myself a pass to go into the village of Williamsburg to get a “square meal.” He did so, although he told us that the major’s pass was rightfully of no value. We used it and passed the guards. We travelled the entire length of Duke-of-Gloucester Street, inspected William and Mary College, but could find no place where we could buy a meal of victuals. We found no grocery store, and no place where we could purchase crackers and cheese.

Finally, we were told of a colored woman, a “free black,” where it was thought we could get something to eat. We tried that place. We found the cottage and were received courteously, but on our inquiring if we could get “a bite” were told that she had nothing in the house.

Conversation continued a while, during which I told her that we were friends of the colored people, and that we would pay for all we received, still she replied she had nothing to cook a meal for us. I then inquired: —

“Have n’t you a loaf of bread? ”

“Oh, yes, I have some bread.”

“Well, have you a bit of bacon?”

“Oh, yes, I have some bacon.”

“Have you some coffee? ”

“Yes, I have some coffee.”

“Well, some fried bacon and potatoes with a slice of bread and a cup of coffee will be all we could expect, and all we want.”

“I reckon I can furnish you so much.”

So we had, really, a good, square meal.

#### THE CAPTAIN’S PASS.

Another day, we were hungry again and I thought, “Well, if those guards honored the major’s pass, why should they not honor a captain’s pass.” I wrote a pass for the captain and lieutenant and signed it with my name, as “Captain commanding Redoubt Number 7.” It served.

#### THE WOMEN OF WILLIAMSBURG.

But this is not all in regard to that ancient town of Williamsburg.

Both on that first passage through the streets of the town and on subsequent visits,

I found the women extremely hostile to the Yankees. We passed several ladies, sitting on the front porch of a house, and we doffed our caps as we passed. They instantly turned their heads and looked the other way. Farther on, we saw two young ladies coming towards us, on the same sidewalk we were on. They would not meet us, but crossed over to the opposite sidewalk.

On a visit to that town many years after the war I found the same feeling still existing, among the first ladies of the place.

#### PRESIDENT EWELL.

In contrast to this, let me mention another incident. A little company of us from Boston visited Williamsburg in March, 1888. As we were wandering around the buildings of that ancient and honorable institution, William and Mary's College, the second oldest college in the United States and the originator of the

#### PHI BETA KAPPA

fraternity, we chanced to fall in with the president of the institution, Colonel Benja-

min Stoddert Ewell, a noted scholar and educator. An interesting conversation ensued, in which he inquired where we were from. On our telling him we were from Boston he exclaimed, "From Boston? If I were to attempt to write the history of Virginia, I should go to Boston to write it."

Upon our inquiry why he should do that, he replied, "Boston knows the history of Virginia better than we do."

On our expressing surprise at that statement, he said: "Come with me," and at once unlocked his house, which was then closed, his family being away on his farm, and escorted us into his parlor. Giving us seats, he brought to us a fine pen and ink portrait of Washington sitting upright at the dining table. He then told us that in 1872 he was in Boston getting subscriptions for William and Mary, when he showed this portrait to Dr. Samuel A. Green, the well-known secretary of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Dr. Green immediately responded: "Ho! that was taken only a little while before he died."

"How do you know that, Dr. Green."

“That is plain enough, Dr. Ewell. He has his false teeth in, which he wore only a short time before he died.”

“Well, well,” said Dr. Ewell to us, “I did not know that Washington ever had false teeth, but Dr. Green did, and he readily observed that their presence altered the contour of the profile of his face.”

Dr. Ewell’s visit to Boston in 1872 was to get subscriptions to re-endow William and Mary College. He had good success until the great Boston fire in the autumn of that year came and wiped it all out. That was a great blow for this ancient college and for its worthy president.

### OUR FACES TURN HOMEWARD.

Now the term for which we had enlisted had expired, and on the 30th day of June, 1863, we retraced our steps from Williamsburg to Yorktown and on Thursday, July 2d, embarked on board the propeller, the John Rice, reached the North River, N. Y., on Saturday about sunset, July 4, anchored there over night, heard of the fall of Vicksburg and of the battle of Gettysburg, and on Sun-



day morning, about ten o'clock, steamed away for the home port, Providence, arriving there and debarking about one o'clock on Monday, July 6th.

#### OUR BRILLIANT RECEPTION AND MUSTER OUT.

We were received with military honors, partook of a bountiful collation in Railroad Hall, deposited our arms and equipments in the Fall River Iron Works Building on South Main Street, and were dismissed to go to our homes.

We were mustered out on Monday following, July 13th, receiving our discharge papers at the hands of Captain W. Silvey, of the First Artillery, mustering officer.

#### OUR REGIMENT.

The regiment returned home with eight hundred and thirty-eight men and thirty-eight officers, leaving fifty-five enlisted men in hospital, and one commissioned officer and three privates on detached service. During the nine months' absence seven deaths occurred. Many others had been discharged by

reason of ill health. No one had been killed by the enemy.

The regiment was composed of men of *superior character*. Of the full thousand men, eight hundred were from Providence and the remaining two hundred were, as stated before, from four near-by towns. Two hundred of the men from Providence were recruited by the Y. M. C. A. We were always proud of companies I and K. In character and all soldierly conduct they reflected honor upon the eleventh, throughout the entire campaign. Many members of Company K have carved out for themselves an honorable record. I have not the facts in many cases, but a few have come under my observation.

#### SOME PRIVATE SOLDIERS IN COMPANY K.

In addition to the record of the commissioned officers already given, I would mention that Corporal Lauder studied medicine and was for many years an honorable and honored physician and brilliant surgeon in Bridgeport, Conn.

Corporal Orlando P. Thomson, a success-

ful business man in New York, now living in Ridgewood, N. J.

Orin S. Arnold has had an honorable career in Rhode Island.

Ermin Baker, after his discharge, recovered fairly good health and managed for some years, till his death, a successful mercantile business in Providence.

The Gerlack brothers also have been successful merchants in Providence. One of them is still living.

Josiah R. Goddard became a faithful and useful missionary in Burma, Asia, and in China. His death is lately reported.

Robert B. Little, a noble man, honest, generous and public-spirited, rose to a high position in business and in public life, in Providence. He died, greatly lamented, a few years ago.

His brother, Christopher Little, and "Billy Patterson" should be mentioned in the same category.

Walter R. D. Vaughan, William H. H. Sutton, Sergeant Viall, Sergeant Pond, William H. Westcott (alias "Jacket"), Sergeant Winsor, his brother, Albert W. Winsor, and

many others in our company should receive honorable mention.

It was a company deserving high praise and I am and always was proud of it.

I remember on a rainy Sunday when we were stationed at the Convalescent Camp, I visited in the afternoon every tent in my company. In twenty-three cases I found the men reading the Bible, many others writing letters to their homes.

But how few of them are among the living at this day — a half century later!

#### CLOSING REFLECTIONS.

In closing these sketches I am impelled to state some facts, call attention to others and do a little moralizing.

First, as to the time at which it was organized. This was in September, 1862. Everything was at a standstill. The great Peninsular campaign was ended. McClellan had carried his army within a few miles of Richmond, but Richmond was not captured. His base of supplies was no longer up the York River, but the James. From there the army was ordered back to the Potomac.

Thus far matters had not been favorable to the Union army. Business was paralyzed. Recruiting was slow. The whole North was disheartened. President Lincoln dared not issue the emancipation proclamation. Great Britain and France seemed ready to acknowledge the Confederacy. The President called for 300,000 nine months' men. Enlistments began slowly.

That was not the time when the dregs of society enlisted. The very circumstances of the time brought to the 11th Regiment a far better class of men than usually presented themselves. Hence the quality of our men. The patriotic men, young and old flocked to our standard. The impetus given by the fact that two entire companies were recruited by the Providence Y. M. C. A. helped not a little the enlistments at other recruiting places.

#### THE SERVICE WE RENDERED.

Another matter of importance was in regard to the kind of service we were called upon to render.

Through our entire term of service the general wish of the regiment, officers and men,

was that we might *go to the front* and give effective aid in putting down the Rebellion. But again and again this was denied us, although strong and vigorous requests for this purpose were made repeatedly to the military authorities at Washington. They were without avail. We stayed at Miner's Hill, within the defenses of Washington, just three months, one-third of our term of service, perfecting ourselves in company, battalion, and brigade drill. It was tiresome, but we did become a well-drilled regiment. At one time when we were encamped at "Deserted House," I was looking on, at our afternoon dress-parade, — being "officer of the day" and therefore not in the drill, — when a regular army officer, from a light battery stationed near us, who was standing by my side, exclaimed, "What regiment is that? I did not know we had a regiment here from the regular army. A remarkably well-drilled body of men."

As we have seen, on the 13th of January, 1863, we were ordered to move to "The Convalescent Camp," between Washington and Alexandria, to do guard duty. We were kept

here doing severe and unpleasant duty, in guarding, night and day, that great camp of convalescent soldiers who were waiting to be returned to their several regiments after being discharged from the hospitals. Disagreeable, unpleasant, arduous duty! Our guard lines extended entirely around the Canvalescent camp, a distance of some three or four miles. When my company was on duty, I was obliged as captain to make "Grand Rounds" in the night between twelve and four o'clock, no matter how stormy or muddy I found it. I sent to Washington and procured a good, strong pair of long-legged rubber boots, and sometimes my feet would sink so deep in the mud that I would pull my foot out of the boot, rather than pull the boot out with the foot.

Finally, after another three months, we were relieved from that miserable guard duty and on the 16th of April, we embarked for Suffolk. Then followed our campaign at Suffolk and on the Peninsular for the remaining three months.

Thus were our duties assigned to us, and however agreeable or unpleasant, the 11th

Regiment of Rhode Island Volunteers did everything required of us with fidelity and thoroughness. *We never shirked our duty.*

I will only mention one more point, and that is the character and the ability of the officers of this regiment. In addition to what I have said of the high character of the enlisted men, I beg to add:—

#### COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

The 11th R. I. Regiment was well officered. They were not perfect. They sometimes made mistakes, but they were all first class men and good soldiers. Moreover, in the main, as much as possible, they were just to the men. We had but a very few courts-martial. None of any consequence. Not one worth mentioning here.

We had three colonels, Colonel Edwin Metcalf, till November 11, 1862; Colonel Horatio Rogers, from December 27, 1862, to January 31, 1863; Colonel George E. Church, from February 11, 1863, to muster out, July 13, 1863.

Colonel Metcalf was a prominent attorney in Providence, a fine soldier, with valuable



experience, a brave man of large ability, and greatly beloved by the entire regiment. He was offered the colonelcy of the Third Regiment, Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, and accepted. He served in command of that regiment till his resignation, February 5, 1864, when he returned to Providence and resumed the practice of law. I saw him on his way home. I rode with him from Westerly to Providence. In conversation he remarked to me that the day he left the 11th Regiment was a sad day for him. He wanted to go "to the front" and certainly thought he would have a larger chance with the Third Regiment than with the 11th. But he found that Third Heavy Artillery just bottled up at Hilton Head, with no chance of actual service. During the time of his service there his wife died in Providence. He was a disappointed and discouraged man.

However, after his return to Providence he married again and became a consistent member of the Congregational church. He was a man of great ability and a wise, brave and skillful soldier. He was followed, in the 11th by Colonel Horatio Rogers, Jr., a

younger man, brave, brilliant, and a good disciplinarian. He remained with us only a month. His place was taken by Colonel George E. Church. He commanded the 11th about five months, till we were mustered out, July, 1863. Colonel Church was a strong man, of great energy and ambition, a brave soldier, who after the war made a brilliant record as a railroad man in South America and in England. He died recently, and in his will gave to Brown University his valuable library of about 3500 volumes, many of them of great value, on the geography, history, and development of South America.

Our lieutenant colonel for the entire period of our enlistment was Lieut. Col. J. Talbot Pitman, an experienced soldier, and a man of energy and decision. He commanded the regiment in the absence of a colonel about one sixth of the period of our service.

Robert Fessenden was adjutant during the whole campaign, beloved by all the members of the regiment, prompt and faithful, a lovable man.

Rev. John B. Gould filled the arduous task of chaplain through the whole term. He was

a faithful, conscientious, careful man, always devoted to the welfare of the regiment.

So of the others, major, surgeons, quartermaster and all; no regiment, I venture to say, from the state of Rhode Island, ever had a better, broader, more intelligent, braver, or more faithful set of officers than the 11th Regiment.

Of course, complaints would be made, and soldiers, as well as the rest of humanity, know how to make them. But, now, as we look back over a full half century, we can not but honor and praise our officers.





